

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF QADHAFI VISIT TO MOSCOW

REF: MOSCOW 19074

1. SUMMARY. FIRST REPORTS OF QADHAFI VISIT TO MOSCOW
INDICATE BOTH SIDES ARE TRYING TO MAKE WHAT PROGRESS THEY CAN
ON BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES BUT THAT, ON LATTER
ASPECT, BOTH SIDES ARE RATHER FAR APART AND LIKELY TO STAY
THERE. LEADERSHIP TURNOUT FOR QADHAFI SEEMS NORMAL DESPITE
BREZHNEV'S NON-APPEARANCE AT AIRPORT ARRIVAL CEREMONIES. NO
HINT YET OF FINAL AGREEMENTS TO BE SIGNED BUT EMBASSY
NOTES APPEARANCE AT ARRIVAL CEREMONIES AND OPENING TALKS
OF SOVIET MIN OF MARITIME FLEET, WHICH MAY PRESAGE SOME
ARRANGEMENT FOR SOVIET MERCHANT MARINE USE OF LIBYAN
FACILITIES. END SUMMARY.

2. DEC 7 PRAVDA CONTAINS FIRST SOVIET NEWS OF QADHAFI
ARRIVAL, NEGOTIATIONS AND EXCHANGE OF DINNER SPEECHES
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WITH PODGORNYY. QADHAFI WAS NOT MET AT AIRPORT BY

BREZHNEV AS EGYPTIAN POLITICAL COUNSELOR HAD PREDICTED (MOSCOW 19074). PODGORNYY DID THE HONORS, WITH GROMYKO AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE.

3. FIRST DAY'S NEGOTIATIONS HOWEVER WERE AT AS HIGH A LEVEL AS ONE COULD WISH WITH BREZHNEV, PODGORNYY, KOSYGIN AND GROMYKO ACROSS THE TABLE. ATMOSPHERE WAS DESCRIBED AS FRIENDLY AND IN A SPIRIT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. IN THIS CONNECTION WE NOTE THE APPEARANCE OF SOVIET MIN OF MARITIME FLEET, GUZHENKO, AT ARRIVAL CEREMONIES AND OPENING TALKS. THERE IS SPECULATION AMONG WESTERN DIPLOMATS HERE THAT THIS MAY PRESAGE A POSSIBLE MARITIME AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD ENHANCE MERCHANT FLEET ACCESS TO LIBYAN FACILITIES.

4. WE NOTE ALSO PRESENCE IN LIBYAN DELEGATION OF CIC ARMED FORCES, JABER, WHO WAS JUST IN SOVIET UNION, AND MIN OF INDUSTRY AND MINERAL WEALTH TALHI AND MIN ELECTRICITY ARBASH, WHO ARRIVED IN MOSCOW A FORTNIGHT AGO FOR TALKS WITH SOVIET AID OFFICIALS.

5. PODGORNYY-QADHAFI DINNER SPEECHES CONTAINED SEVERAL INTERESTING POINTS. PODGORNYY:

- MENTIONED GENEVA CONFERENCE IN PASSING. THE ONLY WAY HE COULD HAVE SAID LESS ABOUT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN TO SAY NOTHING AT ALL.

- LAID BLAME FOR UNCEASING TENSION IN MIDDLE EAST ON POLICY OF "IMPERIALIST CIRCLES" WHICH HAS INCITED ISRAELI AGGRESSION, OCCUPATION OF ARAB LAND, AND REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE LEGITIMATE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS.

- SINGLES OUT PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, AND REPEATED PREVIOUS SOVIET POSITION ON ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967 AND ON PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD.

6. QADHAFI SEEMED TO TRY TO AVOID OFFENDING HIS SOVIET HOSTS IN HIS OWN REMARKS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME MAKING CLEAR LIBYAN POLICY DIFFERENCES WITH MOSCOW OVER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VARIOUS MIDDLE EAST ISSUES. QADHAFI:

- MENTIONED REPEATEDLY THAT THERE WERE "MANY" POINTS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LIBYANS AND THE SOVIETS (THUS IMPLYING THAT THERE WERE OTHER POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT).

- LAID SPECIFIC AND REPEATED BLAME AT THE DOOR OF THE U.S. FOR THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

- SAID THAT DISARMAMENT WOULD NOT BE ATTAINABLE

UNTIL EXPANSIONIST POLICY OF IMPERIALISM WAS STOPPED
AND CLAIMED THAT "ACCORD" (SOGLASIE) BETWEEN GREAT
POWERS HAD NOT RESULTED IN STOPPING IMPERIALISM'S
POLICY OF EXPANSION.

-- DENIGRATED (WHILE RESPECTING "POINT OF VIEW
OF OTHERS") IMPORTANCE OF GENEVA CONFERENCE AS MEANS
OF SETTLING PROBLEM IN MIDDLE EAST.

-- IMPLIED A CONTINUED BELIEF IN THE NEED TO
ESTABLISH A UNIFIED PALESTINIAN STATE IN PLACE OF
ISRAEL BY REFERRING TO THE NEED TO EXPEL THE "RACISTS"
FROM THE REGION OF PALESTINE AND TO RETURN THE POPULATION
OF THIS TERRITORY TO THEIR OWN LAND.

-- EXPRESSED A READINESS TO ACCEPT HOPED-FOR
CHANGES IN U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST, BUT
AFFIRMED ALSO ARAB DETERMINATION TO DEFEND THEIR
RIGHTS SHOULD SUCH CHANGES NOT BE FORTHCOMING.

7. COMMENT. DESPITE PODGORNYY'S SOFT-PEDALING OF SOVIET
SUPPORT FOR MEPC (WHICH AFTER ALL IS STILL A CORNER-
STONE OF PRESENT SOVIET M.E. POLICY), NEITHER SOVIET
NOR LIBYAN SIDE SEEM TO BE TRYING TO IGNORE DIFFERENCES
WHICH SEPARATE THEM. RATHER BOTH SIDES SEEM TO BE USING
VISIT FOR GENUINE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AT THIS TIME
OF GENERAL STOCK-TAKING IN M.E.

8. THIS, WE WOULD GUESS, IS PRIMARY PURPOSE OF MEETING,
ALTHOUGH THERE MAY ALSO BE AN ELEMENT OF SHOWING
EGYPTIANS THE SORT OF RELATIONSHIP WHICH IS POSSIBLE
BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND AN ARAB COUNTRY DESPITE
THE EXISTENCE OF PRINCIPLES DIFFERENCES. MATLOCK UNQTE ROBINSON

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